

**Dr. Yvonne J. Pendleton**



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NASA Ames Astrophysicist Yvonne Pendleton was recently elected a fellow of the California Academy of Sciences for her contributions to the study of organic material in the interstellar medium in the Milky Way and other galaxies. She is an infrared observational astronomer in the Planetary Systems Branch, who pursues the origin and evolution of interstellar organic matter, from star forming regions to the incorporation of this material into primitive Solar System bodies. Recruited in her senior year from Georgia Institute of Technology, she has been a research scientist at Ames since 1979. She earned her Master's degree in Aerospace Engineering from Stanford in 1981 and her Ph.D. in Astrophysics from the University of CA Santa Cruz in 1987. Since that time, her research into star forming regions and interstellar dust have resulted in over 70 publications in scientific journals, the editorship of two conference proceedings books, and many invitations to present her results at national and international conferences. Asteroid 7165 Pendleton was named in her honor by the International Astronomical Union specifically for her contribution to the study of organic materials and the role these basic building blocks may have played in the origin of life on Earth. Education and Public Outreach is very important to her, and she has visited over 7,000 students in Bay area classrooms in the past decade.

Recognized as NASA Ames Mentor of the Year in 1996, her most recent outreach effort is an integrated science curriculum for ninth grade students called "Voyages Through Time". She was a co-principal investigator on this NSF and NASA sponsored project, and worked closely with the principal investigator, Dr. Jill Tarter (SETI), and other co-PI's to deliver the year long CD-rom based course on astrobiology.

She is married to astronomer Dale Cruikshank, and has a son and a daughter both in high school. Dale and Yvonne are jointly interested in the role of organic material in the early Earth, so they have a few overlapping research projects that allow them to sometimes

travel to telescopes and conferences together. PTA, Boy Scout and Girl Scout volunteer, she stays actively involved in pursuits involving her kids, and loves having a houseful of their friends. In her copious spare time she reads murder mystery novels and has threatened to actually finish writing one someday. The protagonist is a female astronomer who....

